

Captain E. L. Alexander  
Commanding Officer

Red Sea

18 January 2007

Dear MIDGETT Family and Friends,

Happy New Year! Our time in CENTCOM is quickly drawing to a close. We just completed a two day engagement in Djibouti, training their Navy's law enforcement personnel. Our next operation takes us into the Red Sea and some important professional engagements with Yemen and Jordan. All of the people we come in contact with have been very happy to see us, and supportive of our efforts to provide a secure maritime environment. Every ship we talk to says that the area is safer because of U.S. and coalition presence. Apart from oil revenues, the waters of the Middle East are a great economic treasure for the nations in the area. By maintaining an active U.S. and coalition presence we are denying terrorists, pirates and smugglers free access to the sea, and encourage trade and commerce essential for long term stability in the region. A stable Middle East in turn promotes security at home.

The holidays passed quietly at sea. During that time we were working in the Bab Al Mendeab (BAM), which is that narrow waterway separating Africa from the Arabian peninsula and connecting the Gulf of Aden with the Red Sea. We boarded and queried many vessels transiting the area to detect smuggling and develop a maritime picture of activity. In between flight operations and boardings we celebrated the holidays. The Christmas gifts and cards were greatly appreciated by all. We had holiday routine during Christmas and passed out gifts. Carolers went around the ship the night before and sang for everyone and the ward room cooked a Christmas feast for the crew. On New Years everyone tried to catch their favorite football team on the Armed Forces Network.

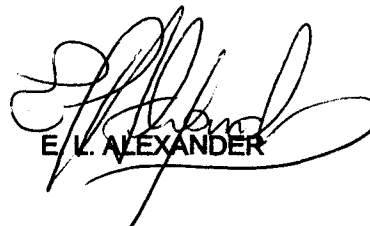
After New Years we were allowed to go into the port of Salalah Oman for a 3 day break. Although a small seaside town, we at least were able to get off the ship for a while. Some of the places visited were the local resort hotels and a place called Job's Tomb, supposedly where the biblical character Job is buried. Wild camels were roaming all over and many picked up frankincense and myrrh at the local shops.

We are operating in the tropic latitudes so there is a fairly constant trade wind. That helps keep the temperature moderate but also brings a great deal of dust from the surrounding deserts. In this part of the world the dust is a fine light brown which covers the exterior of the ship. I remember working off the Sahara a few years ago, and although we could not see the Sahara desert I can tell you it must be made of red sand. The ship I was on was covered in its dust to a point where it stained our white hull pink. Oh well I guess there are worse things in life.

Once we leave the Red Sea we will transit the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea; hopefully steering clear of pink Sahara sand storms. We will be sending some crew members on to their next assignments in the Med and will be welcoming 17 new crew members. The new crew will then have the rest of the transit home to break in and get qualified. For the crew members departing I want to thank them and their families for their sacrifices and hard work while assigned to MIDGETT. Your work has helped to make a positive difference, to the security of America as our country continues to combat terrorism around the world. Good luck on you next assignments. For those crew members reporting in next month, welcome aboard to you and your family. You are part of a great crew that has a tradition of operational excellence.

As the time grows closer to our return stay in touch with the Ombudsmen for the latest news and updates. This is a time when all kind of rumors may pop up and can be an emotional roller coaster. The Ombudsmen will have the most accurate information so don't be caught up in the rumor mill.

Semper Paratus

  
E. L. ALEXANDER

### **Members Arriving**

BM1 Harper  
DC3 Harding  
OS3 Blackman  
OS3 Masga  
SK3 McCormack  
SNBM Kleaver  
FN Russell  
FA Miller  
SN Burnam  
SN Smith  
SN Romero  
SN Rush  
SN Vavrusa  
SN Warren  
SA Gannon  
SA Rodriguez

### **Members Departing**

LT Bustria  
AMTC West  
BM1 Daly  
OS2 Lompe  
PA2 O'leary  
AMT3 Cendejas  
DC3 Lucena  
HS3 Johnson  
FN Casarez  
FN Lareza  
FN Thayer  
SN Blackman  
SN Dewey  
SN Lemley  
SN Miles  
SN Moore  
SN Roberts